



STARTING A RECYCLING PROGRAM



A Smart Business can save money through avoided disposal costs as well as conserve natural resources and energy through waste reduction activities such as waste prevention, reuse and recycling. The first step is simple. Start a recycling program.

Why should businesses recycle?

Well, it's the right thing to do. Recycling may save you money in avoided disposal costs (the less you throw away the less you should pay) and saves natural resources and energy. Recycling also may generate some revenue for your business through the sale of recyclables.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that as much as 65-70 percent of the waste generated nationwide is from businesses and industry. So no matter what line of work that you are in, manufacturing, health care, retail, wholesale, food service, professional services, construction, your company can benefit from business recycling.

There are many materials that can be recycled including office paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, wooden pallets and so on.

How do you begin?

There is no one right way to develop a program, but the objectives are clear: first reduce as much of your waste as you can then reuse or recycle. Here are a few easy, proven tips to set up a successful recycling program at your business.

- **Conduct a waste assessment/audit.** This will allow you to determine what is in your trash and to identify waste reduction and recycling opportunities. A waste assessment/audit may include doing a walk-through of your facility, asking employees for ideas and suggestions, performing a waste sort and examining facility records. How much waste are you generating? How often is your waste picked up? How much

do you pay for trash pick up? Make sure to count all areas of operation (office, shipping, receiving, break room, etc.). For a sample waste assessment/audit form, visit www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness or call the S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program at 1-800-768-7348.

- **Find a market.** Once you determine what you would like to recycle, contact haulers, brokers and recyclers to see if there is a market for your material. Visit www.scdhec.gov/environment/admin/CWM/CWMrindex.htm for options. In addition, you can contact your local recycling coordinator (visit www.scdhec.gov/environment/lwm/recycle/counties.htm for contact information) or call the S.C. Smart Business Recycling Program at 1-800-768-7348.
- **Educate employees.** Education and outreach should begin before you start your recycling program. Make sure everyone knows what material you will be recycling and how the materials need to be prepared. Don't forget housekeeping – they can play an integral role in making your program successful. Recycling bins and containers should be clearly labeled. If you would like assistance in creating signage and other educational materials, contact the Smart Business Recycling Program at 1-800-768-7348.
- **Evaluate your program.** Be sure to keep track of waste management expenses and savings as well as recycling and disposal numbers. This information will help you evaluate your program and report the results. For a sample tracking form, please visit www.scdhec.gov/smartbusiness or call the Smart Business Recycling Program at 1-800-768-7348.



The South Carolina Smart Business Recycling Program is a partnership of the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control's Center for Environmental Sustainability, Small Business Environmental Assistance Program and Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling as well as the S.C. Department of Commerce's Recycling Market Development Program. The program provides a variety of services to help businesses reduce waste, recycle and develop sustainable practices.

South Carolina
Department of Commerce

Printed on RECYCLED Paper
OR-0676 02/11